

a member. Pauline is currently team leader of the certified professional secretary [CPS] membership committee and spearheading the seminar and publicity committee for the Michigan division annual meeting. She also serves as proctor for the biannual CPS exams at Macomb Community College in Fraser.

Throughout such a busy career, Pauline has found time to marry Mr. William Gatt and raise their 4-year-old son, James Gatt. Her example should serve as an inspiration to all of us concerning what we can accomplish. On behalf of all Michigan residents, I would like to wish Pauline all the best and congratulations.●

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

● Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, as Black History Month, 1996, draws to a close, we have had an extraordinary opportunity to remember African-Americans who have changed America. We find our Nation more culturally enriched in the arts, in film and theater, in literature and music, in the humanities, the sciences, in our military and political history, in education, communications, and civil rights because of the contributions of African-Americans. But the most compelling stories are of the earliest African-American leaders who are among America's greatest heroes. They struggled and succeeded in the face of slavery and against the odds, and rose above the extraordinary prejudice and hatred of the 19th century to have a lasting impact on the cultural, social, and spiritual fabric of America. To name just a few: poets like Phillis Wheatley, a Massachusetts native and the first African-American woman to have her poetry published; Crispus Attucks, said to be the first person killed in a Boston battle that presaged the Revolutionary War; and the soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the first African-American unit in the Civil War who were memorialized in the film, "Glory," and in a statue on Boston Common are not heroes to just African-Americans, but heroes to every American.

Their stories are part of this Nation's lexicon and should be as commonly known as the story of another Massachusetts native, Paul Revere, but they are not. That is one of the reasons that, 20 years ago, Black History Month formalized a 70-year-old celebration begun in 1926 by Dr. Carter Woodson, the father of black history. Dr. Woodson set aside a special time in February to celebrate the achievements and contributions of African-Americans and the rich traditions and proud heritage of those who contributed so much to the building of this Nation.

But, as we celebrate we must also recognize that the contributions of African-Americans serve as a bridge over the troubled waters of economic insecurity. Their struggle and achievements in the face of incredible odds give us hope when we see that struggle

for freedom, and equal justice has become an economic as well as a social struggle that finds hard working, self-reliant, responsible African-Americans looking for a good job at a liveable wage. The economic disparity between African-Americans and the rest of America is disproportionate. I know that African-Americans in Massachusetts—from Roxbury to Lowell, from New Bedford to Springfield—are working harder and harder, like all Americans, without receiving a raise, struggling to get the skills they need, and trying to educate themselves and their families, and some are falling further and further behind.

So, this month, in recognizing the importance of African-American heroes and their contribution to the history of America, we must not only reaffirm our commitment to civil rights and equal opportunity but to building an opportunity economy that provides for a better paying job, decent benefits, and a chance for their children to make more and do better in a world that judges them as Martin Luther King said, "on the content of their character." Black History Month is one more important step in tearing down the economic, social, and cultural walls that divide us and bridging the racial gaps between us. As we approach the 21st century, this will be one of our greatest challenges.●

TRIBUTE TO BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

● Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I am here today to celebrate the achievements of the 27 schools from my State that were awarded the Department of Education's prestigious Blue Ribbon Award. The Blue Ribbon Award signifies excellence in education and calls attention to remarkably successful public and private schools.

Blue ribbon schools display the superior qualities that are necessary to prepare our young people for the challenges of the next century. The recognized schools serve as models for other schools and communities seeking to provide high quality education for their students. This year 266 secondary, junior high, and middle schools will be presented with the Blue Ribbon Award.

After a vigorous screening process by each State Department of Education, a panel consisting of 100 outstanding educators and other professionals reviews the nominations, and selects the most promising schools for a site visit. After the schools have been visited, the panel considers the reports and forward its final recommendations to Secretary Riley, who then reveals the names of the schools selected for recognition.

It is my honor and privilege to identify the following 27 Texas schools selected to receive a Blue Ribbon Award: Klein Oak High School, Plano Senior High School, Renner Middle School, Forest Meadow Junior High School, Strickland Middle School, Forest Park Middle School, Mayde Creek High

School, Groesbeck Middle School, Lawrence D. Bell High School, Grapevine Middle School, Spring Forest Middle School, Spring Oaks Middle School, Northbrook Middle School, James E. Taylor High School, Westwood High School, Noel Grisham Middle School, Travis Middle School, Socorro High School, Lubbock High School, Lackland Junior-Senior High School, Georgetown High School, Coppell Middle School West, Edward S. Marcus High School, Booker T. Washington High School for Performing and Visual Arts, Crookett Middle School, Carroll High School, and Carroll Middle School. They are clearly among the most distinguished schools in the Nation with a persistent commitment to excellence in education.

I am elated that of all the schools selected from the entire United States, 10 percent are in Texas. Their achievements stand as positive testimony to the dedication, pride, and devotion to responsibility of the students, teachers, administrators, and parents at each of these blue ribbon schools.●

CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, in my home State of Connecticut and across the Nation, something very positive is happening. Every day we hear about crime and violence committed by youth, teenage pregnancy, falling test scores and a host of other indications that the fabric of our society is fraying. These are problems that certainly need to be addressed. But today I would like to talk about Character Counts, a program that has committed itself to the children of this Nation in an affirmative way that conveys the faith and optimism we have in our youth and the high expectations we have for them. I am very proud to be a part of this growing endeavor.

On yesterday, I joined with my colleagues in the introduction of a resolution to designate October 13-19, 1996 as this year's National Character Counts Week. Character Counts Week will focus attention on the importance of character education and mobilize participation in the program. Last year in Connecticut, almost 3,000 students and teachers from 75 towns attended a rally in Hartford kicking off Character Counts Week, and I know many other States have had an equally enthusiastic response to the promise of character education. I invite all Americans to join us in taking part in the character education of our young people as it is everyone's duty.

Character Counts emphasizes six values—trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. These are values that we all hold in common; these values transcend religions, cultures, socio-economics, and generations. But these values need to be explicitly taught to our children and reinforced and reflected in the way we live and in the way we shape our society. Character Counts does exactly